

# North Carolina Music Educators Association

## Overview and Position Statement on Program Enhancement Funding in North Carolina



### Overview

It has been common and accepted practice that North Carolina provide teacher allotments in all grades and set class size limits in grades K-3 for many years that have *allowed flexibility* for local school districts to fund a variety of teaching positions including positions in visual art, music, theatre, dance, health and physical education, world languages and in other special areas that are usually taught by a licensed teacher specialist other than the K-3 general classroom teacher.

These specialized teaching positions, otherwise known as “Program Enhancement Teachers,” do not have a separate allotment provided by the state and typically local school districts fund these positions within the flexibility between the number of teachers allotted and the class size limits that are currently in place.

A budget technical corrections bill adopted on June 28, 2017 by the General Assembly describes intent language to use data collected to fund a new allotment for Program Enhancement Teachers for local school districts beginning in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

<http://ncleg.net/Sessions/2017/Bills/House/HTML/H528v4.html>

### "PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT TEACHER FUNDS

**SECTION 7.14.** It is the intent of the General Assembly to use the data collected in accordance with the reporting requirements set forth in Section 2 of S.L. 2017-9 to fund a new allotment for program enhancement teachers for local school administrative units beginning with the 2018-2019 fiscal year."

If funded, this allotment will support the continued inclusion of Program Enhancement Teachers in elementary schools including teachers of the arts, world languages, health, special reading enhancements, and nearly any other non self-contained class.

If funding is not provided in next year's budget, the average class size for a specific grade would need to be within the allotment ratio. In effect, a lack of funding will force districts to reduce the number of teachers of the arts, world languages, health, special reading enhancements, and nearly any other non self-contained class beginning in 2018-2019 to comply with SL 2017-9 because this provision removes the flexibility between teacher allotments per classes and the maximum for a single class or for the district-wide average. We understand that there is **no waiver process or flexibility allowed** for this provision.

### Position

**NCMEA supports the intent language included by the General Assembly and urges legislators to fully fund Program Enhancement Teachers (including music and the arts) for all local school districts without delay.** Without this funding, the class size allotment provision adopted by the General Assembly in SL 2017-9 will go into full effect during the 2018-2019 school year. This provision, without full funding for these teachers, is harmful and damaging to music education, and therefore children, in North Carolina.

The timing of the General Assembly funding these teachers is critical because the 2018 Session does not begin until mid/late-May 2018. By this time, at the end of the school year, many current educators have already been required by their school systems to state their intention of staying employed (or not) at their school. No one can be expected to commit to staying when they do not know whether their position will be funded for the next school year. Excellent music educators already are leaving for other states or choosing not to teach in North Carolina because of the timing problem with this funding decision. Therefore, NCMEA humbly requests that the General Assembly fully fund Program Enhancement Teachers during one of its Special Sessions or otherwise before its May 2018 Short Session begins.

Lawmakers across the nation have enumerated music as a fundamental component of a well-rounded child in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). NCMEA supports the ability of North Carolina school districts to offer equitable music instruction by qualified, licensed music teachers across our state. We do not support any provision that will, in effect, cause an unwritten mandate for school districts to reduce the number of music teachers in their district in order to comply with lower class sizes. No elementary child in North Carolina's public schools should experience an education without music instruction by a qualified, licensed music teacher. We urge lawmakers to act quickly to ensure that music is included in our children's future.

NCMEA believes that our citizens and many NC legislators support quality music programs in our schools and understand that music is a natural and important part of a child's growth and development. Our mission is to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all. The positive effects of music instruction create life-long success in students.

To contact your legislators about this issue, please follow this link: Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee  
[http://ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing\\_110](http://ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing_110)